

First Things First: Raiders QB Derek Carr on His Faith in Christ

By [Charles Chandler \(https://billygraham.org/author/cchandler/\)](https://billygraham.org/author/cchandler/) • November 16, 2017

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Oakland Raiders quarterback Derek Carr (4), leads a prayer after a game with the New York Jets in Oakland, California, on Sept. 17.

Derek Carr is as unabashed in sharing his faith in Christ as he is in leading the Oakland Raiders with a fiery gusto that inspires teammates and fans.

On social media, he describes himself this way, in this order: Follower of Jesus Christ, husband, father, Oakland Raider.

"Being a quarterback is what I do, but it does not define who I am," he wrote on his website, derekcarrqb.com. "At any moment, any second, my football career could be taken away, but my faith and [relationship with God](http://peacewithgod.net/?utm_source=bgmainsite&utm_medium=pwg+Link&utm_campaign=pwg+Internal&utm_content=derek+carr+decision+article+111617&outreach=derek+carr+qb) (http://peacewithgod.net/?utm_source=bgmainsite&utm_medium=pwg+Link&utm_campaign=pwg+Internal&utm_content=derek+carr+decision+article+111617&outreach=derek+carr+qb) will never be taken from me."

Though Carr doesn't seek attention, the authentic, consistent way he lives out his faith, both in actions and in words, has afforded him many opportunities to use his platform as an NFL standout to bring attention to Christ.

"[God] has given me this special talent, and I want to use it to glorify Him," Carr wrote. "I am grateful for the opportunity to further His Kingdom by sharing my faith on and off the football field."



Carr immediately spoke of giving back to the Lord after he received a five-year, \$125 million contract extension in June, which at the time made him the highest paid player in league history.

"The first thing I'll do is pay my tithe, like I have since I was in college," he said at a Raiders' press conference after the new contract was announced. "That won't change."

Carr also spoke of giving offerings to the Lord.

"The exciting thing for me, money-wise, honestly, is that this money is going to help a lot of people ... not only in this country, but in countries around the world," he said.

BGEA president Franklin Graham praised Carr's commitment to tithing, saying via Facebook: "The media asked what he'd do first with

his earnings, and his answer has shocked some people. ...

Derek isn't ashamed to talk about his [walk with Jesus Christ \(http://peacewithgod.net/?utm_source=bgmainsite&utm_medium=pwg+Link&utm_campaign=pwg+Internal&utm_content=derek+carr+decision+article+111617&outreach=derek+carr+qb\)](http://peacewithgod.net/?utm_source=bgmainsite&utm_medium=pwg+Link&utm_campaign=pwg+Internal&utm_content=derek+carr+decision+article+111617&outreach=derek+carr+qb). I appreciate his boldness!"

Carr, 26, has emerged as one of the best quarterbacks in the NFL. He finished in the top five in the league's most valuable player voting last season. His 81 touchdown passes through three years is fourth-best all-time for any quarterback's first three seasons.

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—Derek Carr

Carr has helped turn around a Raiders' franchise that had suffered through 13 consecutive non-winning seasons before going 12-4 last year.

He had the Raiders looking like Super Bowl contenders as last year's playoffs neared, but he suffered a broken fibula in the next-to-last regular season game against the Indianapolis Colts to essentially end the Raiders' hopes—without him, they went on to lose their first playoff game. Carr, however, took to Twitter shortly after the injury with a faith-filled message.

"Things happen in life that we don't always understand," he posted. "But I do know this: I serve a God [Who] loves me, and is the ultimate healer! ... I am not worried one bit."

Carr recovered fully and returned this season to lead the Raiders as they again try to reach the Super Bowl, but then suffered an early-season back injury that was expected to sideline him for at least two weeks.

Carr and his wife, Heather, have experienced God's healing touch firsthand in the life of their son Dallas, who was born with a potentially life-threatening intestinal condition in 2013. Dallas underwent emergency surgery shortly after his birth and spent more than three weeks in neonatal intensive care, then later had more operations, but is now healthy. Derek and Heather celebrated Dallas' fourth birthday in August.

The couple now reaches out to other families and children via their partnership with Valley Children's Hospital in Madera County, California, where Dallas was treated.

Carr is well-known for his compassion. Last March, word got out that he helped a stranded motorist who had run out of gas. The man, Ron Reeser, didn't initially recognize Carr, who drove Reeser to a gas station in order to fill up a gas can. Then they rode back to Reeser's SUV.

Along the way, Reeser asked Carr what he did for a living. Carr replied that he played football and loved the Lord. Reeser assumed his driver was a college player, but after a few more questions discovered that he was being helped by none other than the Raiders' starting quarterback.

Before departing, Carr prayed for Reeser, and Reeser quickly went public with the encounter on social media, which then spread to the mainstream press.

For Carr, it was just another opportunity to be a witness for Christ and to extend the love of the Lord through an act of service.

Carr grew up in a Christian home with football-playing brothers David, a former NFL quarterback and the No. 1 pick in the league's 2002 draft, and Darren, who played defensive tackle at the University of Houston.

While Derek is a devoted Christian now, he says the turning point in his journey with the Lord came during college at Fresno State University. He was saved but backslidden, and Heather—with their dating relationship at a crossroads—wrote a letter challenging him to live what he believed. Carr was cut to the heart, repented and fixed his [focus on Christ \(http://peacewithgod.net/?utm_source=bgmainsite&utm_medium=pwg+Link&utm_campaign=pwg+Internal&utm_content=derek+carr+decision+article+111617&outreach=derek+carr+gb\)](http://peacewithgod.net/?utm_source=bgmainsite&utm_medium=pwg+Link&utm_campaign=pwg+Internal&utm_content=derek+carr+decision+article+111617&outreach=derek+carr+gb).

"Since then, I've never turned back," he told the Fresno Bee.

He and Heather later married and now serve the Lord together.

Carr says he desires to spread the ultimate message of hope wherever he goes.

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," he posted on Twitter. "I have seen with my two eyes the power of it. I know [it can change lives \(http://peacewithgod.net/?utm_source=bgmainsite&utm_medium=pwg+Link&utm_campaign=pwg+Internal&utm_content=derek+carr+decision+article+111617&outreach=derek+carr+gb\)](http://peacewithgod.net/?utm_source=bgmainsite&utm_medium=pwg+Link&utm_campaign=pwg+Internal&utm_content=derek+carr+decision+article+111617&outreach=derek+carr+gb). [because] it changed mine."

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God bless you, Derek. You are so, so right.

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